

### Claim Amendments

Please amend claims to be as follows.

1. (currently amended) A method for inspecting a substrate, the method comprising:

inserting the substrate into a holding place of a substrate holder;

moving the substrate holder under an electron beam; and

applying a voltage to ~~a conductive element of the substrate holder~~ a  
conductive ring configured within said holding place such that the ring is around the  
inserted substrate,

wherein the voltage applied to the conductive element ring reduces a  
substrate edge effect.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the voltage  
applied to the conductive element ring depends upon a gap size between an edge of  
the substrate and an edge of the holding place.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
determining the gap size as the substrate holder moves under the electron  
beam.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
setting the substrate into a predetermined position within the holding place.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the voltage applied to the conductive element ring depends on which portion of the substrate holder is currently under the electron beam.
6. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
performing a calibration run to determine a voltage function to apply to reduce the substrate edge effect.
7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the moving is continuous.
8. (original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
detecting scattered electrons using a time-delayed integrating detector.
9. (currently amended) An apparatus for holding a substrate that reduces a substrate edge effect, the apparatus comprising:  
a holding place for insertion of the substrate; and  
a conductive element ring positioned so as to be located within a gap between an edge of the holding place and an edge of the substrate.
10. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the conductive element ring is electrically isolated from the substrate.
11. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:  
at least one insulating element supporting the conductive element ring.
12. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:

a power supply and conductive mechanism for applying a voltage to the conductive element ring.

13. (original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the voltage applied is variable and dependent on a size of the gap.

14. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a wafer holder, and wherein the substrate comprises a semiconductor wafer.

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) The apparatus of ~~claim 15~~ claim 14, further comprising:

at least one insulating element supporting the ring.

17. (original) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:  
a variable power supply and conductive mechanism for applying a voltage to the ring.

18. (currently amended) A system for inspecting semiconductor wafers, the system comprising:

a mechanism for moving a wafer holder under an electron beam; and

means for reducing a wafer edge effect,

wherein the wafer edge effect depends upon a size of a gap between an edge of the wafer and an edge of the wafer holder, and

wherein said means comprises a conductive ring in said gap between the edge of the wafer and the edge of the wafer holder.

19. (currently amended) The system of claim 18, wherein the means for reducing the wafer edge effect further comprises:

~~a conductive element of the wafer holder to which a variable voltage is applied~~  
applying a variable voltage to the conductive ring.

20. (canceled)